

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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R 100947Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2834

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

JCRC SAMAE SAN THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1694

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, ENRG, PINT, LA

SUBJECT: TALK WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR

1. THIS IS A DELAYED REPORT ON A TALK WITH SOVIET
AMBASSADOR VDOVINE ON MARCH 4TH.

2. MIA BROCHURE. I GAVE VDOVINE A COPY OF A BROCHURE
ENTITLED "THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF LOCATING AND
IDENTIFYING CRASH SITES AND MISSING PERSONS IN LAOS"
WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED AT THIS EMBASSY WITH THE HELP
OF JCRC, AND EXPLAINED TO VDOVINE THAT WE WERE GIVING
THIS PAPER WIDE DISTRIBUTION IN THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD
CLARIFY THE PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE MET IN IDENTIFYING
CRASH SITES AND MISSING PERSONNEL.

2. POL PRICES AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. I ALSO LEFT
WITH DVOVINE A COPY OF A TABLE SHOWING THE DISPARITY
IN KIP OF POL PRICES BETWEEN LAOS AND THAILAND. I
NOTED THAT THE PGNU SEEMED TO BE HAVING SOME DIF-
FICULTY IN AGREEING ON THE NECESSITY OF RAISING PRICES
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IN LAOS. VDOVINE COMMENTED THAT HE AGREED THAT IT

WAS ESSENTIAL THAT LAO AND THAI PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES BE MAINTAINED AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME LEVEL. HE SEEMED SURPRISED AT THE IDEA THAT THE PATHET LAO MIGHT BE OPPOSED TO A HIKE IN THE PRICE OF GASOLINE AS MOST PURCHASERS OF PETROLEUM ARE URBAN LAO ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE. I THEN DREW VDOVINE'S ATTENTION TO THE REAL PROBLEMS CAUSED FOR THE VIENTIANE SIDE BY THE 50 MILLION KIP A MONTH SUBSIDY OF THE PATHET LAO WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAS AUTHORIZED. I SAID
SISOUK AND OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THIS SUM WILL BE USED TO RAISE THE SALARIES OF PATHET LAO SOLDIERS TO A LEVEL HIGHER TO THAT OF FAR. VDOVINE REPLIED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE 50 MILLION KIP SUBSIDY TO BE A ONE SHOT OPERATION AND WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR THAT IT WAS A MONTHLY PAYMENT. IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS SUM WOULD BE USED FOR THE PURCHASE OF RICE AND OTHER FOODSTUFFS FOR THE PATHET LAO FORCES, AND HE DECRIED ANY NOTION OF RAISING PATHET LAO SALARIES IN ORDER TO STIR UP DISSENTION IN FAR.

3. DEAN/SHARMAN. I BROUGHT VDOVINE UP TO DATE ON THE DEAN/SHARMAN CASE EXPRESSING MY ASTONISHMENT AT THE RECENT DENIAL BY THE PATHET LAO OF ANY KNOWLEDGE OF DEAN AND SHARMAN. VDOVINE ASKED ME WHETHER I HAD ANY THEORY WITH REGARD TO PATHET LAO MOTIVES AND I HAZARDED THE THOUGHT THAT THE PL MIGHT BE SEEKING TO ANTAGONIZE THE U.S. AND PROVOKE A REDUCTION IN AID IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THEIR POLITICAL AIMS. VDOVINE SEEMED GENERALLY ASTOUNDED AT THIS THEORY, COMMENTING THAT SUCH A MOVE DID NOT COINCIDE WITH HIS UNDERSTANDING OF PATHET LAO POLICY OR TACTICS. AS HE HAS IN THE PAST, HE ALLUDED TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PATHET LAO ACTIONS AND PROPAGANDA, STRESSING THE ADVISABILITY OF DISREGARDING THE EXAGGERATED STATEMENTS AND UNWARRANTED SUSPICIONS OF THE PATHET LAO. WHITEHOUSE

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